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Certaine neceſſary

RESOLUTIONS

OF

The moſt conſiderable Scruples now poſſeſſing the mindes of the major part of this Kingdome, now obſtructing the intended obedience which ought to be rendred to whatever

Supreame Authoritie

Is inſtantly or ſhall futurely be ordained over us.

Wherein is likewiſe manifeſted and maintained the neceſsity of our ſubmiſſion thereunto, as to the Ordinance of God, againſt all the Sophiſticall Reſervations and alterations of the Devill, or humane policy.

Directed to the due conſideration of all who have (or may have) any affection to the tranquility hoped for in our languiſhing KINGDOME.

By an earneſt endeavourer for Peace and Truth.

London, Ptinted for *W. M.* 1649.

Certaine neceſſary Reſolutions of the moſt conſiderable Scruples now poſſeſſing the mindes of the Major part of this Kingdome.

Deare Countrymen:

I Conceive that all of you, who are worthily intituled Chriſtians, do ſadly ſympathize in the Anxious calamities that our Nation hath ſo long groaned under: but the agravation of our miſeries continue ſpringing from a corrupt Fountaine of depraved zeale, contrary to, and ignorant of the manifold workings of God, inſtant and paſt providence in an evident, yet miraculous manner, over us, and amongſt us: it being impoſſible that even the calmeſt tempers can avoid diſtraction in times of unwonted mutation (though from evill to good) where judgements are wretchedly prejudiced, even againſt the moſt manifeſt demonſtration of the Mighties working powerfully for us.

The heart of man is deceitfull above all things, and proves oftentimes *deſperately wicked*, even in thoſe determinations where conſcience unſeriouſly examined, ſeemes to render them good and holy, to a remiſſe underſtanding;

ing? We are now in times of tryall, and if the Almighty weigh our fore-esteemed Gold in the Ballance of his sacred Justice, proving it altogether lighter then vanity, shall any repine to have his drosse (though even forcibly refined in the Furnace of his afflictions?) it may well be conceived (and justly the Peoples emptine discontents daily confirming it) that most of us had rather returne to the *flesh pots and onions of Egypt*, into stupid captivity; then magnanimously attempt our promised and apparent deliverance through the difficult Wildernesse of opposition. But wee may justly feare that thus tempting God by our pusillanimity, when he so visibly appeares before us, may justly provoke him to bury us in the sands of our confusion before we attaine the promised estate of sanctified tranquility.

No reasonable man is ignorant how difficult it is to unprinciple even the most evill resolutions of selfe interessers; yet when the Mighty by Catagoricall arguments, writ even in Characters of Judgement, leade able to the whole Nation, doth convince them of depravation and folly; it were worse then madnesse for any to resist, even where sense declares, they *kick against the pricks*. Commune with your owne hearts therefore more seriously, and ponder all the sayings of Gods providences, delivered in so many direfull judgements against the enemies of, and extraordinary mercies to the fellow Labourers for our quietnesse; and if this sacred Volume will not afford you precedent for, and exhortation to the imbracing of those things that really belong to your peace, when maturely and conscientiously applyed; yet you may happily live to see with your eyes what hereafter, as now, God will justly blinde you who not understand and partake of in your affections, *viz.* even the prosperous condition of this now disturbed Nation, wrested forth of so much bitternesse and violent opposition, as it is inthralled under at this day.

But in respect so many consciences pretend themselves

selves to be yet unresolved (or rather irrationable) some being wretchedly, some obstinately ignorant; and frequently pretend scruples, concerning the possible lawfulnesse of becomming obedient to and affectionately for the intended future Government, in regard that most by their Oath of Allegiance, many others by the bonds of their Covenant, stand ingaged, to their thinking, with their lives and fortunes to abet and maintaine *Monarchy*, and utterly and forcibly to exclude, reject, and extirpate all other Methods for common safety or Government, although they truly appeare, even in some of their owne understandings, both laudable, lawfull, and most advantagious for any other Commonwealth, (soolily doth the Devill suggest that for Divinity, which will prove very Machiavilianisme in fitting these scruples for firebrands of future dissention.) It will therefore be most requisite to consider, wherein chiefly we have just cause of scruple in case of such urgent necessity where God so powerfully effecteth his owne will, and then to examine whether resistance in the same case, be not absolutely against the Ordinance of God, which will inevitably render damnation to the opposers in the event.

And herein I would not be mistaken for partiall, or private in affection to this course of Gods working in and upon our Nation; for I ingeniously confesse, I have ever held *Monarchy* to be the most absolute consistent with, and best forme of Government for any People to whom God scales not his remarkable evidences of unwillingnesse for it; but when a People (as wee have done) shall turne such an excellent grace of God into wantonnesse, when our slavish insinuating flattery shall cry *non vox hominum sonat*, to the destructive dictates of a Prince, forced by our wretched acclamations to overswell with ambition above the bounds of paternall duty to his People, well may that King be tooke away in Gods displeasure from a People, that dishonour

the giver in Idolizing ſo rich a gift.

But to the purpoſe, and in purſuance of the firſt conſideration, *viz.* wherein we have juſt cauſe of ſcruple, (in reſpect of Oath or Covenant made or taken) in caſe of ſuch urgent neceſsity, where God ſo powerfully demonſtrateth and effecteth his owne Will in change of our Government?

In relation whereunto, this Quære will requiſitely be reſolved. Whether Kings, as being Gods annoynted, have not a perpetuall priviledge by their originall inſtitution, to ſtand as the onely allowed Vicegerents, and (under God) Supreame of their People?

To which we grant, That *Moſes* was inſtituted and appointed King in *Jeſurum*, *Saul* and *David* over *Iſrael*; but if we inquire whether Gods reſpect, chiefly to his People, or of theſe particular Kings were intended by their Ordination, the ſtory of *Iſrael's* afflictions in *Egypt* cleeres it, that properly for their good of generall deliverance, and not for benefit of ſingular Majeſtie or Supremacy to *Moſes*, was he called of God to that great worke; from whence we may plainly argue, that the good of a People is in ſupreme eſteeme with God, and not the Majeſtike advancement of Princes over them; and doubtleſſe, (for the holy Spirit in the whole courſe of that and the like Storie explaines it) God more cleerely ſhewed ſupreme reſpect to the Peoples publique deliverance, then to *Moſes* his Calling, in regard he was but to ſerve God and his People in the mighty worke; Now were there ſuch an irreſiſtable force in the Supreme Priviledge of this primary inſtitution, that it were not lawfull for God (proceeding from this Ordinance) by man, or man from God, to alter the manner of a Peoples Government, ſeeing all Governors are *unive ſis minor* to the People how comes it that this Royall Ordinance was ſo ſpeedily changed in the time of the ſame Peoples Government by Judges: None dares affirme without blaſphemy but that

their

their Government by Judges was approved and confirmed by the ſame God that before gave them a King. And if ſo, how inconſiſtent with the good of any Nation will it prove, to urge for that as Supreme, which God hath and will put under their feet: *Saul* and *David* were after this elected Kings, (at the Peoples importunity for that Government) by God himſelfe, but how diſpleaſing the manner of their deſires were the Story evidences. And you may reade how ſhort a ſucceſſion of totall Government in *Iſrael* was aſſigned both to *Saul* and *Davids* Poſterity; might not *Iſrael* in their revolt from *Rehoboam* have ſcrupulized as much to have diſcerted him, and change (though not their Government) their Governors; but we finde the Spirit records it to have been the will of God, which if *Rehoboam* had reſiſted, even himſelfe had periſhed. Nor from hence it cannot be ſuppoſed that *Iſrael* in their act of Revolt proved oppoſers of, but operating Inſtruments for the then effecting of the revealed will of God, whether to judgement upon themſelves for former tranſgreſſions or not, is not here neceſſarily diſputable; but moſt certainly, God intended, and did thus mightily manifeſt his owne liberty to alter the Government of his people, even by ſubordinate inſtruments, which evidenced both himſelfe and *Iſrael* diſobliged from an irrevocable continuance of that originall inſtitution of *Davids* Houſe to be Kings over all *Iſrael*; And if ſo, queſtionleſſe a people ſo experienced in Gods powerfull workings for a change over and amongſt us, as we are, and wherein his will by his works (and our continued offences appeare ſo manifeſtly for it,) need not (when we are thus forcibly, by the power of God in man, diſ-ingaged of all bonds to what is of preſent exiſtence) though formerly according to his will, ſtartle to become obedient, even with all willingneſſe of minde to that preſent or future Government which doubtleſſe will be eſtabliſhed; and according to his will, as we hope in mercy, although we have juſt cauſe of doubt in regard of our tranſgreſſions.

Nor

Nor will this case of conscience prove so rigidly resolvable with you whose luke-warmnesse or fearefulnesse hath from the beginning of our troubles detained you in Neutrality; for it is far easier for him who hath not made it a sinne to his owne conscience in conceiving it so) to have had either hand or heart in degrading that Authority which you conceive unquestionably good, (but hath not dared to contend for) to resolve obedience to, and imbrace that good which is tender'd you without sweating for or against it, than for any other whose depraved judgements have desperately hurried them through an boast of sound reasons to strike at the very head of such an establishment, and whose violent motions still speake their implacable hatred to it.

But you will say, all this proves not the necessity of a present alteration amongst us, or the lawfulnesse of it by any power which you conceive subordinate, in regard the Apostle so expressly chargeth obedience upon every soule unto the higher powers which both by Oath of Allegiance and Covenant you have inclusively sworne to remaine properly in the King.

For solution of which (in relation onely to those who have not ingaged in contest for any alteration, the rest being supposed satisfied in their owne minds already) we must consider that such Oathes oblige subjection no further then to extant your Authority; And although conscience, from the tenure of such Oathes, may justly urge obedience to be given to an essentiall remaining power; yet they binde not any to obey what really is not, nor to resist what inevitably must be; and as the power that is extinct was ordained of God, so that power that will be confirmed by him, upon safe and in certaine powers, will prove it selfe to be immediately by the same will from the same God, whether in mercy or judgement towards us, the event according to our faith or diffidence in him will evidence.

Now

Now wherein any further ſcruple concerning preſent or future conformity remaines, I am ignorant and the rather confident that there is juſtly none, in reſpect that it is manifeſt that God in divers ages, and to divers Nations, hath granted other formes of Government beſides Monarchy, even with approbation, the certainty whereof remaines upon Record, both divine and humane, (as is well knowne to all that have been any thing ſtudious in either) and if divine providence ſigne a remarkable change amongſt us, with his approbation of it by ſo many wonderfull works, both of his mercy for, and judgement againſt the proceedings of the preſent Authoritie, that as none under it muſt neceſſarily leade us to examine whether reſiſtance mentall or active in this caſe will not prove it ſelfe to be againſt the Ordinance of God.

St. *Paul* tels us indefinitely, That the Powers that are are ordained of God; then if an overweening affection to the paſt power (though admitted it ſelfe to be principally the beſt) ſhall not onely hinder our conformity to a preſent Ordinance of God, but move us to reſolve upon mentall reſervations for reſiſtance thereof, it being ſo cleerely evidenced that it is the will of God ſo to conſtitute ſuch a power as we are in all likelihood to fall under, without doubt ſuch oppoſition will be verily and immediately againſt the Ordinance of God, which muſt needs precipitate the reſiſters into that conſequent gulphe of condemnation mentioned in the ſame Text.

But Countrymen, I hope better things of you all, let not ſelfe intereſts therefore or obſtinacies deceive the expectations of the peacefully minded amongſt us, for your Chriſtian correſpondence and conjunction with them in unanimous obedience; our innumerable diviſions already raging amongſt us, are more then enough to provoke the God of peace, even yet for a long ſeaſon to ſuſpend us that heavenly bleſsing; and it may be juſtly feared, that our refuſall of it upon fearmes ſo apparently conſonant with his immediate will, will provoke him even utterly to expoſe us to a generall deſtruction.

We are not unmindfull that the Silver Smithes of *Epheſus*

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sus may urgently and politiquely argue for the worship of *Diana*, even against the Apostles of Christ in a tumultuous manner; the almost publiquely private interests of many thousand families in respect of subsistence and livelihood, being properly and solely supported by a Regall Government may pleade much for it. But notwithstanding, although these may more justly call for consideration of provision for, then the case of the *Ephesians* (no one interest amongst them in it selfe absolutely depending upon suppression of the Gospell) yet the publike peace of a Nation instantly and futurely to be established, cannot reasonably or religiously be held obstructable, because many continuing dis-affected to it, may happily perish by it; yet doubtlesse God will in his good providence, by his Instruments in present Authority over us, so provide for those whole obstinacy towards, and diffidence in them, are not the just occasions of their punishment by waste and beggery) that even the extreames downcast amongst us by that meanes may at least have abundance in content.

If we would reflect upon our Saviours example (who was obedient even to an usurper, and yet knew himselfe to be the absolute King of *Jud.* successively legitimate according to the flesh) We could not but condemne that zeale for extreame preposterous, which animates any private man upon any specious pretences whatsoever to resist, or not become obedient unto that present Authoritie we live under. Doubtlesse had it been of Divine allowance, that way to have disturbed the present peace our Saviour was not so stupedly bent to let *Cæsar* remaine impunable for his usurpation, but his exemplary subjection, (though the King clearely intimates how precious a Kingdomes concord ought to be much more unto us) which who endeavours to disturbe, upon any pretence, will finde it culpable in the highest nature, and justly meriting condigne punishment; a sad example whereof we are shortly to have delivered us in the eminentest of Instruments.

But you will say, a man may be actually quiet, and outwardly subject to the present Government, and yet in conscience

science, reserve intire all obedience, even for his memory to, and hopes of regall Government to be restored.

But I conceive such halfe obedience can never prove an acceptable sacrifice, either to God or thy Countries peace, for the stench of reserved salvation for every provocation thereunto, will render it abominable both to God and thy Country.

If halting betweene two opinions would bring a man to heaven, who would not prize hypocrisie as a Jewell? or if temporizing would render a man fully honest upon all trials, what need were there of grace or integrity? he that is not with our Saviour is against him; if therefore any man resolve upon non-conformity, yet as the least his condemnation will be the lesse, he seemes no friend to what he really abhors: Therefore if any such be, it will but become them (though passively) to sacrifice their soules in patience, knowing that all clandestine measures of humane policy, however flourished over with sophistry, cannot alter the immutable decree of the Almighty in any thing, much lesse in a matter of so ponderous contentment, as the Government of a Nation; the event of the highest humane attempt in this nature, having ever amongst all Nations rendred them rashly evill and manifestly, both fruitlesse, and severely punishable, our own sad and deere bought experience in the whole progresse of our late miserably protracted Warre, sufficiently of it self instructing it to every ingenious capacitie.

But in respect conscience seems with so many to be ingaged to indeavour by forcible meanes to establish truth amongst our people according to their owne method (Religion having been ever made a cloake for all insurrections) I earnestly desire to be resolved how it is possible for any people to professe and indeavour for a forme of godlinesse, and not deny the power of it in disturbing publique peace to establish it, since the fruits of the Spirit are defined to be, *love, peace, gentlenesse*, &c. subjection to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake (either actively or passively) with patience and long suffering, being an absolute necessary concomitant.

comitant. In these graces, either we must deny the power of godlinesse to be above the forme of it, (which to do would be palpable blasphemy,) or else conclude that such preposterous and disturbant proceedings are *earthly, sensuall, and devillish*; So Paul es horatus, *if it be possible, to live peaceably with all men*. And can any thinke to claime an inheritance in the Kingdome of peace, who shall indeavour to forge discention out of peace it selfe, in lines of peacefull freedome? it were worse than madnesse to imagine that the *sword of the Spirit* needs any earnall sharpning, or that Gods truth is so weake to require humane force for its establishment to propagation; I am certain they that testifie their love to truth more clearely by obedience to all the Commands of the God of truth, have not so learnt Christ, who by his last Legacy left them his peace for their patrimony.

Thus I have briefly indeavoured to cleare the way to our obedience and conformity to all present or future Authority over us, from the branches of frivilous ambiguity; and herein, if I have failed, yet my ardent affection hereby manifested to publique unanimity may justly vindicate my intentions from seeming sinister. I confesse these subjects so transcendent in their qualities, deserve the elegantest explanations of the most acute and sound writers.

But in respect there is so generall a silence concerning these particulars, even in this fittest season for their discussion, I conceive no charitable judgement will censure me culpable (at least in intention) where my zeale to publique concord, hath (in as much moderation as I was capable of) freely illustrated it selfe; However it shall be my frequent and fervent supplication to the giver of every good and perfect gift, that we may be all like minded in the earnest indeavouring for the things that belong to our peace, both with God and amongst men; and then questionlesse wee shall mutually rejoyce in the fruition of sacred brotherly unity; remembring that in Christ service ceremonially exhibited, or not ceremonially, availeth nothing but to become new creatures; To that end, let us endeavour to be renewed in the spirit of our minder, that we may be the better enabled to stand fast in our Christian Liberty.

FINIS. *Imprimatur, Gilbert Mabbot.*

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